

Memoranda of the last illness
of
Rachel Lloyd,
of
Birmingham.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom,
a good understanding have all they that do his command-
ments.

In reviewing the life of our dear departed Mother, the truth of this divine word is very strongly impressed upon our minds. From her earliest years she had a deep and awful sense of reverence for God, and a great fear of offending Him; she has frequently remarked that she could not remember the period when she was indifferent to religion; and her conscience was most tender with regard to any departure from what she considered the divine law, or her duty respecting it: this influenced her whole life, which was remarkably devoted to the service of God from her youth upwards.

From her occasional references to the past, it appeared that she dated the full dedication of herself to the Lord, to the visit of some American Friends, when she was about 14 years old; and from what we have learnt through others, we believe that the period so often marked by youthful cheerfulness, too frequently also by frivolity and disregard

to the momentous interests of eternity, was in her case, remarkably conspicuous for self-denying efforts for others & a devoted attention to the help and comfort of her parents. She evinced an energy in promoting their interests which was most uncommon, for she was not less efficient in the varied and active duties of a large family of which she was the eldest, than skilful in matters of business which required attention, when her Father was absent on his journeys.

Before she had gained her 15th year her attention was drawn to the subject of the Slave trade, which about that time engaged the zeal of the thinking and benevolent classes of society. Earnest were her desires to be helpful to a most injured class of her fellow-creatures, and she gladly united with others in the disuse of sugar, which she continued through life. The interest which was then first excited was scarcely dormant, during the interval in which the fallacy of the abolition of the slave trade abolishing slavery was proved. Time added to the anxiety she felt to aid in the annihilation of this enormous evil, and she was one of the first to be aroused to action after the voice of woe was again

wafted over the waters and cried for help: to the end of her life she was known as the uncompromising friend of the oppressed slave, and there are few of her acquaintance who cannot bear witness to her zeal and energy in this cause.

When she was in her 23rd year she married our beloved Father, and settled in Birmingham, where the remaining 63 years of her life have principally been spent, and where it is not too much to say, her unvarying aim has been, to preserve a conscience void of offence towards God and man.

She loved the principles in which she had been educated, and sought to uphold them by every means in her power, not only in her own family, by a strict adherence to its self-denying practices, but by her influence over all, with whom she associated. She delighted to exercise the rites of hospitality, to those labouring in the cause which she had at heart; and after she was unable actively to manifest her sympathy with them, it ever gave her the liveliest satisfaction & pleasure to have the opportunity of welcoming them to her house,

and personally expressing her interest in their proceedings. In the domestic circle, her firmness of purpose and excellence of judgment united with warm affections, made her a most valuable helpmeet to her beloved husband, with whom for 60 years she participated in the joys and sorrows of life, and though like others it was a chequered course, she often said that "goodness and mercy had followed them all their lives long."

In the autumn of 1849 she was bereft of her dearest earthly support, and felt in its fullest extent that she was "a widow and desolate;" but most strikingly did she prove herself one "that trusteth in God, and continueth in supplication and prayers night and day." She felt that the tie which bound her to earth was removed to heaven, and from that time with increased submission of will she sought that every action should tend to the glory of God: she "counted not her life dear unto her, if she might finish her course with joy." The duties of life she fulfilled with unabated promptness and discretion, the cordial welcome brightened her countenance, her house and her heart were as welcome as ever to the claims of affection and hos-

pitality: but she carried about with her the sense of bereavement, which gave an altered tone to every interest; and it was evident to all that her affections were fixed upon unseen realities and that her heart was above.

Our dear Mother possessed amazing decision of character, with unusual powers of sympathy: she was ever ready to weep with those that weep, to seek out the needy in his distress, and to bestow her goods to help the poor; her efforts were untiring to clothe the naked and to feed the hungry. She entered into their circumstances and seemed herself to suffer with them: she was ever ready to consider how she could alleviate their trials, and could not enjoy a dainty or luxury herself, if she knew of a sick person whom it could relieve, or whose sufferings it could mitigate. Her family were often struck with her unvarying consistency in this respect. She loved simplicity as a Christian duty; she practised it in herself to the utmost extent for the sake of giving to others: she could not bear to think of trial and hardship without making some effort to ameliorate it, and almost every day, she devoted some hours to the cause of the poor.

Amongst the different benevolent objects which claimed her attention, the one peculiarly interesting to her from its commencement was the Society for Aged Women. Neither the increasing infirmities of age, nor the inclemency of the weather could induce her to forego her periodical visits to the abodes of suffering age and poverty: she tenderly sympathized in the individual difficulties of each aged person; she sought not only to relieve their wants, but to point them to that Saviour whose grace could meet their need for time as well as eternity; those who accompanied her in these labours of love, can testify that "when the eye saw her, it blessed her, when the ear heard her it gave witness unto her."

It is very interesting to her family to remember that her last ride on the 18th of 2nd mo. 1853 was to make her accustomed calls to these abodes of poverty: she was then in her usual health and remarkably active for a person of 84. Two of her children had been spending the evening with her; after they were gone she went into the kitchen to give some directions, and on leaving it, without any apparent cause, she fell and broke the bone of her left hip.

This afflictive providence commenced a fresh era in her life: from being one of the most independent of women as regarded personal attentions, she now became entirely helpless, and dependent upon her family for every outward comfort. Most endearing was the intercourse into which these new circumstances introduced her children, and the increased intimacy and unreserved confidence, was mutually enjoyed. It was the reverence of filial love, with the openness of fellow believers in Christ.

The fruits of the Spirit were called into daily and hourly exercise, as the severe sufferings she endured were borne with exemplary submission and patience. Days of weariness and nights of pain were her frequent portion, but no complaining word escaped her, and her gratitude for every little attention and her efforts to number her mercies were very striking to all who had the privilege of attending upon her. Her mind was remarkably clear, and she was able to enjoy listening to reading and conversation. It might literally be said that psalms and hymns and spiritual songs occupied almost all her thoughts; she would often repeat portions of her favourite hymns:

one of these was —

"Are these thy mercies, day by day

"To me above the rest;

"Then let me love thee more than they

"And try to serve thee best."

Another, often upon her lips was,

"Oh for a heart to praise my God,

"A heart from sin set free

"A heart that's sprinkled with the blood

"So freely shed for me."

She was exceedingly cheerful and bright in her remarks. Sometimes she would say, The poet made a great mistake when he said "Man wants but little here below" I am sure my wants are very many." She loved to think of the time when we should all be united above, and sometimes tried in her feeble voice to sing the sweet hymn, "Oh, that will be joyful:" the last time she attempted it was but two days before her death. During these months of confinement she took a lively interest in the concerns of her friends, and of the Meeting of which she had so long been an active and consistent member,

and in which she held the office of an Elder.

She was very grateful for the numerous and unexpected proofs of the love of her friends, and many will remember the lively zeal she manifested for their good, and her affectionate desire to be remembered in their prayers.

Towards the end of last eleventh month, she was attacked with bronchitis, which greatly prostrated her strength, and she thought would take her home: she remarked one morning that she had been nicely helped along, and that she should be helped to the end, for help was laid on One mighty to save, and able to deliver, and that He would help all those who came unto God by Him.

On the 10th of the 12th mo. she spoke of the great trial she had passed through, and her thankfulness that she had been enabled to bear it, and added that "if in the least degree the Lord's grace was magnified, she should esteem it a favour." It was indeed giving praise as in the fire.

The next day after reading she expressed what a

blessed thing it was that we had such exceeding great and precious promises, saying with great emphasis, "They are true and Amen for ever" Many interesting remarks were made on the 18th connected with her earnest desire that her Grandchildren might not love the world nor the things of the world; since the assurance was that if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in Him then in reference to herself, she added, "After endeavouring to serve the Lord for a generation, you should be willing to let me go."

On the 20th the tidings which she received of the death of her dear Grandson's wife, deeply affected her again and again she would say, "It is the Lord's doing, but it is marvellous in our eyes." Every day her thoughts were with the mourners, and on the morning of the 23rd she kept from sleeping at her usual time, that she might be lifting up her heart to the Lord for her stricken and tenderly loved relatives, during the time of the funeral.

About this time she said with tears, "I have been feasting on the text, "There is more joy in the king

dom of Heaven over one sinner that repenteth than over ninety and nine just persons that need no repentance." I love to dwell on the extension of the Lord's mercy to those who have wandered. On another occasion her tears flowed freely when the thought of the eternal misery of the wicked came before her. Truly it was for others and not for herself that her spirit was distressed; patience, submission and love eminently marked her deportment, and humility covered her as a garment.

Towards her beloved Grand-daughters who attended upon her with untiring tenderness, she ever manifested an affection most gratifying and delightful. With a cheerfulness unimpaired by age or sickness she entered upon subjects of mutual interest and both in reading and conversation, often surprized them with the acuteness of her remarks and her ready attention. The past and the present were dwelt upon with a brightness not soon to be forgotten, and her sick chamber was to them a most attractive spot; for they witnessed the aged disciple bringing forth the fruits of righteousness, to the praise of the great Husbandman; and higher example

inviting them to follow her as she followed Christ.

Very beautiful was it to observe how clearly she apprehended her heavenly inheritance, her adoption through faith in the atoning blood of her Lord and Saviour — Jesus Christ, into the redeemed family of God. Through a considerable part of her devoted life, her extremely humble views of herself, with a want of appreciation of the free grace which induced a spotless Saviour to die, the just for the unjust, that He might bring sinners unto God, imparted a measure of bondage to her views, which ill accorded with the joy and peace in believing after which she panted, and which eventually she so fully possessed.

Her extremely tender conscience fully acknowledged the holiness of the divine law, and her utter inability to meet its requirements; and she was greatly comforted when she was enabled to see her need altogether met, in a crucified and risen Saviour.

Jesus became her "all in all": she rejoiced to feel that His blood and righteousness was her only plea; and this blessed truth whilst it removed her fear, made Jesus

more precious. Her desire in all things to be con-
formed unto His image, was more fervent; for love was
the spring of her actions, and all who listened to her
hymns of praise, repeated with such peculiar emphasis,
can acknowledge that she seemed to dwell in the at-
mosphere of Heaven; the fear of death was entirely ta-
ken away. "I have no fear," she repeated again and
again. "I am not tired of life for I have so many
mercies, so much to make me enjoy it, but I have no
fear in death." she remarked on one occasion of severe
suffering "I can truly say, "my soul is in haste to
be gone"; at another time "Heaven will be very sweet
when permitted to reach it." One evening when her
faithful attendant was overcome at the thought of part-
ing, she sweetly said "Thou canst leave me in the
Lord's hands."

For the last few weeks her decline was so very
gradual, that though she had become weaker, and in-
creased disease was too evident in the oppression of the
breathing, her cheerfulness and patience continued unabated,
and hope still pictured months of the same endear-

ing intercourse; but her eye was looking upwards and these new symptoms made her believe that she was "soon going home." The 26th of 14th mo. was the Quarterly Meeting when she saw several of her old and valued friends for a few minutes at a time, and expressed her pleasure in seeing them again. To some of the members of her own family she said "I like to have your company for I feel it very uncertain how long I may be able to enjoy it."

The 27th she suffered much from oppression, and thinking her end was near she said with emphasis, "I live to die that I may die to live eternally." After a pause she remarked, "It would be strange if I were to die on dear Rachel's wedding day," adding, "Don't be distressed for me, my Saviour is near, whose own dear name is Love." Afterwards when a little relieved she spoke of the joys awaiting her, of the eternal weight of glory with which the sufferings of this present time were not to be compared; "But" said she, "earnestly do I wish that all could have it with me." Then she dwelt upon her many mercies, adding, "I have been a poor steward,

many would have done better in my position." The thought of her Saviour touched with a feeling of our infirmities filled her with comfort "Oh serve Him", she said with affectionate earnestness, "serve Him without any reserve, He is a good master, I have not done so faithfully as I ought."

Throughout the 28th she was very feeble, and on being undressed she said "I am brought to a very low estate, I do not think body and soul can long be kept together, but what a comfort to know that we are in the Lord's hands."

On the 29th she was awoken by the Doctor's feeling her pulse, she answered his enquiries with difficulty, concluding by saying, as she closed her eyes again, "I do not see how I can do better than be left in the hands of the Lord" She was exceedingly exhausted during dressing, and whilst resting a few minutes said feebly, "And now another day is flown,

"I'll sing my Maker's praise,
"His comforts every hour make known,
His providence and grace."

adding, it was not quite applicable as they were in the middle of the day.

Some one remarked on the inward comforts still abounding, she said sweetly "Yes I do not feel deserted though very undeserving" repeating after a pause "not deserted, but not deserving either." After dinner she seemed a little revived and spoke again of her many mercies, "Above all," she said "the dear Saviour whose precious blood takes away every stain." She admitted that there were trials, but repeated with emphasis,

"Trials must and will befall

"But in humble faith to see,

"Love inscribed upon them all

"This is happiness to me."

On one occasion she remarked that "it was a great comfort to have nothing to do but to die" and frequently during her illness expressed her gratitude "for the sense of pardoning love through the Lord Jesus Christ."

The 30th the Doctor said to her, it was distressing to witness suffering, he could not alleviate, she replied promptly,

"The Lord he is good

"His mercies are sure

"He only afflicteth

"In order to cure."

She spoke but little during this day, making still an effort to thank us for every little service, and trying to soothe our anxieties by saying that she was comfortable, or that we must not think about her. In the afternoon in answer to some enquiries she said, she wanted "Nothing that man could give;" shortly after she said, "we should have the satisfaction of knowing that we had helped a poor soul in the season of weakness." We said, "It was a poor body, but a happy soul;" she looked up brightly as she said with an expression of joy, "In his blessed kingdom." In the evening to the servants who stood weeping round her bed, she spoke very nicely, repeating her favourite lines

"There is mercy in every place,

"And mercy encouraging thought
Gives even affliction a grace."

When taking leave of her for the night, one of her

kind nurses said, she hoped she would have some comfortable sleep. She replied in her accustomed expressive tone, "Thou needst not be anxious about me, I think;" adding after a pause, "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not lack."

1st of 5th mo. She sank rapidly during the night, and was able to say little the following day, the last she spent on earth, but her voice retained its usual affectionate and earnest sweetness, which gave a double force to all she said.

When one of her sons said to her, "Thou art going before us Mother to the land of the blessed," she replied "Yes, there is an open door." At another time, she said, "This is a great trial of faith and patience." On being reminded of the Saviour's words, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you" she warmly rejoined, "Peace; Peace; and when the 14th chapter of John was commenced, she took up the words and finished the sentence with emphasis. During the evening she made some sweet remarks respecting the change that awaited her in the presence of Jesus, and spoke of the faithfulness of His

promises, and the support she had experienced throughout her illness. We seemed treading with her the borders of that heavenly kingdom of the joys of which she was so soon to partake and in some degree to realize the happiness of being "absent from the body, and present with the Lord." About 11 o'clock she welcomed with much pleasure a beloved son and daughter, and then appeared desirous of rest, saying, "I shall soon be asleep." About 1 o'clock a severe paroxysm of pain aroused her, but on being relieved she twice told us she was comfortable and then closed her eyes in a sweet slumber to open them in the presence of the Lord she loved, and to see the King in his beauty. She is now for ever with Him freed from all the cares, vicissitudes, and sorrows of this mortal life, having had an entrance abundantly granted unto her, into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and admitted into the blissful mansions of her Father's house, to go no more out for ever.

Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints. Psalm CXVI. 15.

